



The Miracle of Mindfulness!

Hey Stress, I know your name! Why are you here? I know your game. Your friend TOXIC STRESS tried to take me out!

One definition for stress on Google states: "A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances." There is political stress, economic stress, generational stress, marriage, family, children and job stress, just to name a few! And don't forget all the personal stress: your health, mind and well-being. On top of all of these stresses is TOXIC STRESS, all the trauma you've been through since you've been on earth. And if that's not enough to stress you out, for those who take on leadership roles, be it parent leadership, community leadership or job leadership you need the tools and support to navigate the added stress of being a leader to take care of yourself, your children, and your family. The miracle of mindfulness is one tool to help navigate the stresses of life, and it will help you to be an effective leader. Mindfulness is defined on Google as: "1. the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something, 2. a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily



Sam Blue

sensations, used as a therapeutic technique."

We cannot change the past, we cannot control all the forces that surround us, but we can have a positive impact on our FUTURE. We are in these stresses together. We can draw from one another, strength and support. I AM PRESENT. I am aware of the stresses and challenges we face, but we can overcome together. The miracle of mindfulness is the tool I use to stay on top of my game. I pray and meditate on scriptures. Your mindfulness may be a quiet walk through the park, or meditating on words and books of your choice. It may be taking time out to relax and do something for YOU! Whatever brings you to a state of mindfulness, embrace it!!!

Working Together-Sam Blue
FRIENDS PAC

Visit the PAC on the FRIENDS website at www.friendsnrc.org



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February is
National Parent
Leadership
MonthSM!

Parent Leadership and Trauma-Informed Practices, and Getting Closer to Happiness

The day before New Year's Eve, I enjoyed a story about happiness on The Ted Talk Hour on my local national public radio (NPR) station. I learned about an app called "Track Your Happiness" created as a part of Matt Killingsworth doctoral research at Harvard University. From others I heard our minds wonder extensively and that we are happiest when we can focus on one thing for a period of time; and, I learned if we slow down, we are likely to be happier too. In the same story, Dan Gilbert, a psychology professor, also at Harvard, firmly states that with few exceptions, after experiencing a traumatic event, three months later the event has no real impact on our happiness. Gilbert says we return to our baseline or close to it; we are an amazingly resilient species. He says we are hardwired to be happy.

Most of us cannot go a day without hearing about a traumatic event; and we have all personally dealt with something that might have been traumatic for us whether it was a serious illness, living through a natural disaster or a fire, being a victim of crime, loss of a loved one, living in extreme poverty, or witnessing violence in our family. (These are among the nineteen types of traumatic events listed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network.) If you are a parent, there

is the added task of helping your child to understand, cope, and overcome the traumatic experience. Some traumas are acute, one-time events, but many families live in communities and familial situations that present traumatic experiences constantly, over a number of years.

The FRIENDS' Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has been discussing trauma and roles that parent leaders may be able to play in their local communities, at the state-level, and nationally. Parents can be on planning groups in local agencies or on state workgroups focused on administration of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, <https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/about/index.htm> and many serve at the national level through the National Alliance's Birth Parent National Network or FRIENDS' PAC where they contribute their stories, help to train others, and inform plans for programming and product development. Eliza Cooper with the PAC, for example, also serves on the Thriving Communities Collaborative in Baltimore. This group helps citizens understand what trauma is, the causes and consequences, and strategies for reducing its occurrence. She has become well-informed about the issue and is now taking action to help others.

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network mentioned earlier is funded by the Center for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in the US Department of Health and Human Services. The Center is jointly coordinated by UCLA and Duke Universities. The organization's website is resource rich with products, training opportunities, fact sheets, information for different audiences, and much more, <http://www.nctsn.org/>. They also have a new app entitled, "Help Kids Cope" downloadable free of charge, <http://www.nctsn.org/content/help-kids-cope>.

If you are a practitioner or a parent leader supporting survivors or parents of survivors, there are evidence-informed resources available to assist you to do your best. And when you feel the need for relief from your work, perhaps you will check out the NPR story. You can find "Simply Happy," originally aired on February 14, 2014, on the NPR website: <http://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/267185371/simply-happy>

I'd like to believe that we are hardwired to be happy.

*~Valerie Spiva Collins, Director
FRIENDS National Center*



A Parent Advisory Council Member's Reflections on State Leads, Secondary Traumatic Stress, and the Science of the Positive

The FRIENDS National Center's Parent Advisory Council appreciates all of the hard work of the CBCAP State Leads and the care their work provides to others. The state lead position is one of great value and importance, and leads support staff in locally funded programs who work directly with families.

With the new buzz around trauma informed care, we are recognizing that professionals who work with people who have survived traumatic circumstances may experience what is called secondary traumatic stress. They are impacted by the daily exposure and involvement with traumatic situations.

Self-care is so important to maintaining balance and preventing burn out. Developing

a daily plan and scheduling some self-care time is a necessity and not just a want or desire.

It was at the 2014 CBCAP Grantees Meeting in New Orleans that Dr. Jeff Linkenbach and Dr. Bob Sege gave a workshop to the participants on the Science of the Positive (SOTP) with a focus on child abuse prevention. "The Science of the Positive is the study of how positive factors impact culture and experience. It focuses on how to measure and grow the positive, and has been applied over decades with agencies, communities, and businesses. It is based on the central assumption that the positive is real and is worth growing – in ourselves, our families, our workplaces, and our communities (Linkenbach, 2007)."

If you attended the workshop you received a copy of the book, *Seeds of Fire, Seeds of Hope* and a workbook on the Science of the Positive. CBCAP participants were charged with incorporating SOTP into their lives on all levels, with self, with family, work and community. If you were not there, you can go to www.montanainstitute.com to gain more information about the SOTP. This work provides an approach for developing self-care practices.

Eliza Cooper
FRIENDS PAC Member



Parent Leadership Is Important: How Can Parents be Involved and Encouraged to Develop Leadership Skills?

As National Parent Leadership MonthSM (NPLM) approaches every February, plans are made to celebrate it. How is NPLM celebrated? Who exactly gets recognized and how do you define parent leadership? These are all excellent questions, with many different answers, depending on who you ask.

Parent Leadership involves a relationship that is shared between parents who are engaged in activities that involve not only their own family, but others as well, and an organization or program in which they participate. Parent leaders have active and involved relationships with program stakeholders, staff and community

members who are committed to helping parents develop meaningful leadership roles. Building relationships and making room for parent leader participation is what helps parent leadership to grow.

This year, FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) celebrated its tenth anniversary. The PAC was developed to ensure that the parent voice is present and included in the work of CBCAP programs and in the technical assistance that FRIENDS provides.

During these ten years, the PAC has worked closely with FRIENDS in many ways:

- Assisting with development of the FRIENDS Parent

Leadership Ambassador Training (commonly known as the PLAT) and now involved in the review process to enhance the training material to build both capacity for parent leadership and parent/practitioner partnership.

- Co-training the PLAT with FRIENDS staff around the nation.
- Helping to author the guidebook, *Meaningful Parent Leadership: A Guide for Success*, which can be downloaded from the FRIENDS website, https://friendsnrc.org/jdownloads/attachments/pl_guidebook.pdf.

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Parent and Child Friendly Resources

A couple of years ago during Child Abuse Prevention Month, my local Parent Leadership Team was looking for meaningful and significant child friendly activities that could be distributed to various programs including schools, teachers, and families. The activities needed to be done in a way that did not incite fear, but gave information and education in a positive manner on how to prevent or handle potentially traumatizing events.

The program staff person I was working with discovered *Kidpower*. *Kidpower* offers free membership to parents and other individuals which allows you to download free coloring activities and tips on how to talk to your children about scary

topics such as bullying or stranger danger. People safety and child protection is why this organization was founded by Irene Van Der Zande in 1989 when someone attempted to kidnap six youth including her child.

Since being established as a nonprofit in 1989, *Kidpower* has served over 4 million children, teens, and adults, including those with special needs, through workshops, partnerships and educational resources. In addition to their own research into what does and does not work in teaching safety skills, there have been a number of independent studies on their program. "*Empowering children with safety-skills: An evaluation of the Kidpower Everyday Safety-*

Skills Program," published in the September 2014 issue of the *Children and Youth Services Review*, documents the impact of the program and how *Kidpower* uses best practices in teaching prevention skills and victimization risk-reduction.

What impressed me was the effective simplicity of the materials which allows them to be used easily by both practitioners and parents interactively with youth.

For information about *Kidpower's* extensive free online library with over 200 free articles, videos, handouts, posters, and podcasts, visit www.kidpower.org

-Eliza Cooper

Parents and Practitioners, Editor

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Parent Leadership Is Important: How Can Parents be Involved and Encouraged to Develop Leadership Skills?

- Reviewing and providing a parent perspective during the development of surveys, brochures, booklets, web content, webinars and other products and materials.
- Participating in committees and collaborations with other organizations that partner with FRIENDS.
- Serving on the FRIENDS National Advisory Council (NAC)
- Participating, presenting and assisting the coordination of the in the Annual CBCAP Grantee Meeting

Over the years, the PAC's role at the Grantee's Meeting and other events has grown from being participants to include additional meaningful roles and responsibilities alongside FRIENDS staff,

State Leads and other participants. PAC members are encouraged and supported to share their experience and expertise. For example, at the recent CBCAP Grantees meeting, the 10th anniversary of the PAC and attending PAC members were recognized by Commissioner López. Following the CBCAP Grantee meeting, a PAC member co-facilitated a session on supporting parent involvement and leadership at the National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect.

In your CBCAP funded or child abuse prevention program or organization how can you and your colleagues grow parent leaders? Making room at the table for the parent voice is critical, but it takes having relationships with parents and

providing the support and trainings needed to make them feel safe, knowledgeable and confident working alongside with staff on a common agenda. Your efforts will not only empower the parent leader, but your organization and you as a person, knowing that you have made the way for the parent voice to be heard in a meaningful and positive manner.

FRIENDS and the PAC shared resource materials in recognition of NPLM during the January Peer Learning Call. Please check with your TA Coordinator or a PAC member to discuss ideas and activities, or look for the link to the archived PLC at: www.friendsnrc.org.

-FRIENDS PAC



Meet the new FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council Members!

Last November the FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) announced a call for nominations seeking potential new members who could add to the breadth of experience and expertise as well as geographic reach of the current PAC. The FRIENDS PAC is excited to announce the addition of three new members!



Dena Hillman (Kansas)

Dena has been an active parent in the Head Start program that her daughter attended. She was on the Head Start Policy Council and the Governor's Board for Head Start. She was selected by Head Start to represent Head Start in Washington, D.C. to advocate on the issue of sequestration. Dena has always been a major advocate in her daughter's education. She is passionate and has a true commitment to insuring early childhood education for children and experience providing support to individuals with disabilities.



Beth Stodghill (Tennessee)

Beth and her husband are the very proud parents of two fabulous teenagers. She is a passionate advocate for children and families in her community and statewide. She is a member of the Governor's Joint Task Force for Children's Justice in Tennessee and has been chosen by the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth to participate in the ACE's Training the Trainer program. Beth now serves as co-chair of the Parent Leadership Council and Chair of the Unsung Hero Award committee for the Tennessee Parent Leadership Initiative.



Bruce Bynum (Texas)

Bruce and Brenda, his wife of 34 years, have four daughters and 15 grandchildren and are adoptive parents to 4 of their grandchildren. Bruce has over 25 years of experience in child abuse prevention work including serving as a family consultant and a coordinator for Parents Helping Parents. He was active with the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition and the Governor's Mental Health Services Planning Council Subcommittee. Bruce believes in the power of parents' voices at the table and feels that engaging families is life changing for all.

Dena, Beth and Bruce join the following PAC active, mentor and alumni members representing these states:

- CA: Art Hernandez (Alumni)
- MD: Eliza Cooper (Mentor)
- MN: Brook Hoffbauer (Alumni)
- MO: Sam Blue
Jessica Diel
- NC: Sam Bowman Fuhrmann
- OR: Jill Gentry

WA: Fatima Gonzalez Galindo
Dawn Patzer

Each November the FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council (PAC) will be announcing a call for nominations. Consider completing a nomination if you are or know of a parent leader who is interested in representing the voice of families to inform the work of FRIENDS and the child abuse prevention community. Information will be posted on the

FRIENDS listserv or you may contact MaryJo Alimena Caruso, FRIENDS T/TA coordinator at mjcaruso@friendsnrc.org or 724-591-5448.

February is National Parent Leadership MonthSM! Find resources and information on celebrating parent leadership on the FRIENDS website: <https://friendsnrc.org/parent-leadership/parent-leadership-month-resources>.





FRIENDS Parent Advisory Council members (from l to r): Dawn Patzer, Jill Gentry, Sam Furhmann, Eliza Cooper, Jessica Diel, and Sam Blue. (Not pictured: Fatima Galinda Gonzalez, Art Hernandez, Brook Hoffbauer and new members: Dena Hillman, Beth Stodghill, and Bruce Bynum)

About the PAC

FRIENDS has established a Parent Advisory Council to provide useful program direction and guidance to the activities of the National Center from a parent perspective. Committee members share their experience and expertise in child abuse prevention and family strengthening through their active participation in FRIENDS workgroups and the annual Grantee's meeting, development/review of FRIENDS written materials, and by providing resource center staff with parent-centered consultation and advice.

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